

Camps

The Camp Wing Connection

Tucked away in the woodsy northwest part of town is Camp Wing, a very busy recreational facility which minds its own business and serves many in a big way.

Most Duxbury residents seem to know little about Camp Wing, other than the fact it has been around a long time.

In 1998, the town meeting approved the \$2.2 million purchase of over 350 acres of prime conservation land when the Camp's ownership decided to sell off about half of its acreage to raise operating funds.

The camp has retained an easement to access and use the town's new conservation area for hiking, fishing, horseback riding, canoeing, and overnight camping.

This week, Camp Wing Director of Development Mairi Fuller

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talked about an upcoming fundraiser, the Camp's continuing connection with the town and some facts local citizens may not know about the property and the work and play accomplished there.

Fuller said the not for-profit Crossroads for Kids Inc., (formerly Boys and Girls Camps Inc.) headquartered on over 200 acres off Keene Street owns and operates Camp Wing and the adjacent Duxbury Stockade, as well as Camp Mitton in Brewster and Camp Lapham in Ashby.

For 64 years Camp Wing has operated in town under the auspices of the owners and a Board of trustees which includes a number of Duxbury residents.

The camp annually serves over 800 kids between the ages of 7 and 13, operating last year with a \$1.1 million annual budget.

Some 80 percent of those attending the summer residential programs are kids living below the U.S. poverty level primarily from the Boston and Cape Cod area.

"Most of the kids that come to us are considered 'at risk' and are referred to the program by coaches, teachers, clergy, and organizations such as the Dept. of Social Services, Carolina Hill Shelter for the Homeless and Big Brother/Big Sister Assn. The kids would most likely otherwise not have a summer camp experience," Fuller said.

Each year Crossroads for Kids Inc. awards over \$500,000 in campership funds covering expenses which include \$1,200 for a 21-day residential pro-

gram per camper and \$600 per camper for a 10-day stay. The counselor/child ratio is one to three, she said.

Camp Wing is a facility busy year round. While the primary focus is on the summer camp sessions, there is also a year round youth leadership program where older kids 14 to 16 spend one weekend a month throughout the school year. Many are former campers. The camp is also a venue for meetings for various non-profit organizations.

During the summer months, the residential camp for boys and girls serves some 250 campers in each of the two sessions. Boys are housed at Camp Wing cabins and the girls at the nearby Duxbury Stockade facility. Daily activities are combined. There are also four two week summer day camp sessions for 115 children ages four to 13 involving kids from Duxbury and surrounding towns, where activities are separate from the residence camp.

The camp also reaches out to the community at large with collaborative camp outing programs and visits to places like Duxbury Beach, the Duxbury Bay Maritime School, Plymouth Plantation, and Mayflower II.

Fuller said fundraising is an all-important part of maintaining a high level camp program and is accomplished through individual and corporate support and special events. Tax deductible donations for camperships are needed she said and can be sent to Crossroads for Kids Inc. 742 Keene Street Duxbury, MA 02332.

Most recently camp officials were thrilled when long time

neighbor, the late Ed Soule, donated his Myrtle Street house and seven acre property to the Camp, Fuller said.

Next month a Harvest Moon Benefit for the Camp fund will be held on Saturday, Nov. 4, from 7:30 to 11:30 pm. at the Camp Wing dining hall. The event is open to the public and will include line and square dancing, a raffle, cash bar and hors d'oeuvres. Tickets are available by calling Anita Haffey at 934-2989 or Jim McClure on 934-5255. Tickets can also be purchased at Back River Fish Market, Bennett's General Store or Westwinds Book Shop.

"We're hoping for a good turnout for a really good cause," said Fuller.